

Northeastern University  
Dukakis Center *for* Urban & Regional Policy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (EDSAT)

REPORT  
DECEMBER 2013

RESULTS FOR THE TOWN OF  
**SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**  
DECEMBER 2013



## The Partners

### About the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy

The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University conducts interdisciplinary research, in collaboration with civic leaders and scholars both within and beyond Northeastern University, to identify and implement real solutions to the critical challenges facing urban areas throughout Greater Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the nation. Founded in 1999 as a “think and do” tank, the Dukakis Center’s collaborative research and problem-solving model applies powerful data analysis, a bevy of multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address a wide range of issues facing cities and towns. These include affordable housing, local economic development, workforce development, transportation, public finance, and environmental sustainability. The staff of the Dukakis Center works to catalyze broad-based efforts to solve urban problems, acting as both a convener and a trusted and committed partner to local, state, and national agencies and organizations. The Dukakis Center is housed within Northeastern University’s innovative School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs.

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The National League of Cities is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for more than 1,600 member cities and the 49 state municipal leagues, representing 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. Through its Center for Research and Innovation, NLC provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences and learn about innovative approaches in cities.

For additional information about the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT), please visit <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/econdev/edsat> or contact

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## INTRODUCTION

A robust, sustainable, and adaptable local economy heavily depends on officials to lead in the formulation and implementation of an economic development strategy. A thorough strategy is developed with an understanding of local business interests, regional resource availability, and jurisdictional<sup>1</sup> advantages and disadvantages. The *Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool* (EDSAT) is an important step that public officials can take to assess their jurisdictions' strengths and weaknesses in regards to expanding and sustaining economic growth. Through EDSAT, public officials and business leaders collaborate as a team, assessing roles of various public and private stakeholders in respect to their effects on local economic development and in creating a business-friendly climate.

By participating in this self-assessment, Shrewsbury will not simply better understand its economic development assets and challenges, but learn to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This report contains a thorough analysis of the responses provided by Shrewsbury to the EDSAT questionnaire.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since 2005, the Dukakis Center has sought to identify the “deal-breakers” impeding private investment in local jurisdictions. Based upon research on the resurgence of older industrial cities, the Dukakis Center has extrapolated and streamlined two of the crucial factors in economic development. First, it has identified municipal capabilities in responding to changing market forces. Second, for key stakeholders, including various levels of government, regional agencies, business leaders, and academic institutions, it has highlighted strategic opportunities for collaboration and economic growth. These conclusions led to the development of EDSAT as well as the creation of an analytical framework for providing practical and actionable feedback to involved public officials. EDSAT is the first tool that resulted from the partnership between Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy (Dukakis Center) and the National League of Cities (NLC).

### Methodology

The EDSAT questionnaire is the product of a rigorous and interactive process involving the Dukakis Center research team, partners in the development community, and communities that have participated in the self-assessment. The foundation for the 200-plus questions that make up the EDSAT questionnaire was established when the Dukakis Center surveyed more than 240 members of the *National Association of Industrial and Office Properties*, now known as NAIOP and *CoreNet Global*. These leading professional associations represent in-house location experts, whose members research new sites for businesses and other institutions. Members were asked to identify those factors that are most important to businesses and developers when evaluating locations. This process generated a set of 38 broad themes relevant to economic growth and development. Examples of themes include highway access, available workforce, and the timeliness of permit reviews. Based on rankings by these location experts, EDSAT themes are identified as “*Very Important*,” “*Important*,” or “*Less Important*” to businesses and developers.

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<sup>1</sup> Jurisdictions are usually categorized as individual towns and/or cities. Each can be several small municipalities, a geographic region, or a county—as long as each plans and strategizes as a single entity in its economic development efforts.

## EDSAT Themes

<b>Very Important ●</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highway Access</li> <li>Parking</li> <li>Traffic</li> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>Rents</li> <li>Workforce Composition</li> <li>Labor</li> <li>Timeliness of Approvals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing Follow-Up</li> <li>Quality of Available Space</li> <li>Land</li> <li>Labor Cost</li> <li>Industry Sensitivity</li> <li>Sites Available</li> <li>Predictable Permits</li> <li>Fast Track Permits</li> <li>Citizen Participation in the Review Process</li> <li>Cultural and Recreational Amenities</li> <li>Crime</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Local Schools</li> <li>Amenities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Business Incentives</li> <li>Local Business Incentives</li> <li>Local Tax Rates</li> <li>Tax Delinquency</li> </ul>
<b>Important ◐</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Transit</li> <li>Physical Attractiveness</li> <li>Complementary/ Supplemental Business Services</li> <li>Critical Mass Firms</li> <li>Cross Marketing</li> </ul>		<b>Less Important ○</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airports</li> <li>Rail</li> <li>Water Transportation</li> <li>Proximities to Universities &amp; Research</li> <li>Unions</li> <li>Workforce Training</li> <li>Permitting Ombudsman</li> <li>Jurisdiction's Website</li> </ul>

Each question in EDSAT addresses a particular location factor and provides three ways to interpret that factor relative to Shrewsbury's response:

1. The level of importance businesses and developers place on that location factor
2. How other jurisdictions participating in EDSAT have typically responded to that question
3. How your jurisdiction's response compares relative to the typical response and the importance of the location factor



FIGURE 1: IMPORTANCE AND PERFORMANCE LEVELS

For example, through the EDSAT analysis, officials may discover the efficiency of the municipal permitting process is both *Very Important* to businesses and developers and that their jurisdiction is taking several months to review a permit application, rather than a few weeks like other jurisdictions. This would be a serious weakness or potential “deal breaker.” Officials would then hone in on the permitting process to understand where the inefficiencies lie and how the process could be improved and/or simplified. Even if a jurisdiction is quite efficient in reviewing permits, it may be worth the effort to further improve the process, as the timeliness of the process is of such significance to businesses and developers. Staff, review boards, or commissions could streamline their work or provide more technical support to applicants to streamline the process. This permitting example outlines the degree to which the EDSAT analysis provides an opportunity for revisiting and redeveloping a jurisdiction's economic development strategies and processes.



 <b>B. Sites Available</b>			
Report of <b>Your Town</b> as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Your Town		Comparison Group
6: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	no		yes

FIGURE 2: SAMPLE RESPONSE

The EDSAT analysis also compares your jurisdiction’s response to that of Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM).<sup>2</sup> For this report, the CGM consists of more than 80 municipalities, 57 of which are located in Massachusetts. The remaining respondents include jurisdictions in California, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Kansas, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Washington. The sizes of these CGM respondents vary from towns with populations of 3,196 (Goffstown, New Hampshire) to cities with populations in excess of 150,000 (e.g. Springfield and Worcester, Massachusetts), based on the 2010 U.S. Census. All of these responses are aggregated to find the median response to each question. For example, with regard to the aforementioned permitting process, your jurisdiction may offer significantly shorter review times than the CGM. Thus, your jurisdiction may possess a relative advantage in a *Very Important* location factor. However, if permit reviews take significantly longer, then your jurisdiction may be at a disadvantage in a *Very Important* location factor. While local and regional regulations or processes affect the review process, businesses are interested in only the absolute number of days it takes to complete the review. If other jurisdictions are more efficient, it would behoove your jurisdiction to investigate and streamline the review process.

EDSAT assigns a color code to highlight the results of your jurisdiction compared to the median response among the CGM. Colors—green, yellow, and red—indicate a municipality’s relative strength in the specific location factor. Green indicates that your jurisdiction is quantitatively or qualitatively stronger than CGM response; yellow indicates that your jurisdiction submitted a similar response; and red indicates a weaker response.

The interaction between the importance of a location factor and your jurisdiction’s relative strength yields powerful information. With respect to businesses and developers, a comparison yielding “red” for a *Very Important* factor represents the potential for a “deal-breaker,” while a comparison resulting in “green” for a *Very Important* factor represents the likelihood of a “deal-maker.” There are several important considerations to keep in mind when reviewing a jurisdiction’s EDSAT results:

1. If your jurisdiction is at a disadvantage in certain *Very Important* location factors, such as possessing a slow permitting process, a workforce that lacks the necessary skills, and infrastructure that lacks the capacity to support growth, it is considered to have three distinct “deal breakers,” regardless of its geographic location or how it compares to the CGM.
2. Your jurisdiction should look at its EDSAT results as an overview, and not focus on a particular factor. One “deal-breaker” does not mean that your jurisdiction should abandon its economic development efforts. At the same time, your jurisdiction cannot solely rely on one or two “deal-makers.” Economic development is a dynamic process and should be managed in such a way that a community continually responds to the changing needs of local and prospective businesses.
3. The interpretation of comparisons and color assignments depends on your jurisdiction’s context in answering the question and its objectives for economic development. For example, if there are significantly

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<sup>2</sup> The term Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM) is used in this report to represent jurisdictions that have completed the EDSAT.

more square feet of vacant commercial space than the CGM median, EDSAT assigns “red” because large amounts of space may indicate outdated facilities in a stagnant local economy. However, the empty space may actually be an asset if your jurisdiction is focusing on attracting businesses that would benefit from large spaces, such as a creative mixed-use complex. Thus, your jurisdiction’s context is important in understanding EDSAT results.

For some questions, the red and green color assignments serve to highlight the response for further consideration within the context of your jurisdiction’s objectives and circumstances. Several questions have no comparison at all. They tend to be lists of potential incentives, resources, or regulations associated with the municipality and will be discussed in corresponding sections of the report.

## SUMMARY AND ORGANIZATION OF RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This section highlights Shrewsbury’s primary strengths and weaknesses in the realm of economic development. EDSAT does not provide an overall grade for a jurisdiction, but rather assesses a jurisdiction’s unique set of strengths, weaknesses, and economic development objectives.

The Dukakis Center staff creates a list of significant or notable responses for each of the *Very Important*, *Important*, and *Less Important* location factors, emphasizing strengths and “deal-makers,” which are not organized in order of importance. Dukakis Center staff suggests that your municipality reviews these lists and uses them to highlight and enhance and market jurisdictional strengths.

Tasks on the weakness and “deal-breaker” lists, however, are prioritized to emphasize the importance of their mitigation or elimination. The Dukakis Center staff arranges the tasks according to feasibility, with consideration of the latitude and abilities of local, county, or regional levels of government. For example, in a jurisdiction with limited highway access, building a new highway interchange or connector would likely be cost-prohibitive, time-consuming, and an inefficient use of local resources. However, other tasks are more feasible with modest investments in time and resources. For example, streamlining the permitting process and making related information readily accessible to both location experts and businesses can be accomplished with no significant capital investments. Although location experts rank both highway access and the timeliness of permitting as *Very Important* location factors, in the prioritized list of potential “deal-breakers,” the permitting process is given a higher priority due to its feasibility in implementation.

### Shrewsbury’s Strengths or Potential “Deal-Makers”

The following lists of Shrewsbury’s strengths are its powerful economic development assets. The town should build upon these assets and promote them to prospective businesses and developers. Shrewsbury should first consider those in the *Very Important* group, then the *Important*, and finally the *Less Important* group. Please note that strengths are **not listed in any particular order** within the three lists.

#### Strengths among Very Important Location Factors

- **Rents (Manufacturing only):** Manufacturing rents are very low compared to the CGM (\$5.50/s.f. for Shrewsbury compared to \$6.00/s.f. for the CGM).
- **Workforce Composition:** Notably, the proportion of professional workers (more than half of the workforce) and managerial workers (26–49 percent) are higher than the typical CGM response, indicating the work force is highly educated and skilled.



- **Labor:** Shrewsbury’s workforce is indeed highly educated. More than 85 percent of residents ages 25 or older have at least a high school diploma and more than 50 percent have at least a bachelor’s degree.

### Strengths among Important Location Factors

- **Physical Attractiveness:** Shrewsbury is a well-maintained suburban community with waterfront access.
- **Complementary/Supplemental Business Services:** Shrewsbury has a “moderately” active business association and two regional chambers of commerce.
- **Cross Marketing:** To its advantage, Shrewsbury engages local and regional business organizations, regional development organizations, and state agencies/organizations to market its jurisdiction.
- **Quality of Available Space:** The quality of the available development sites is high in Shrewsbury.
- **Land (Space):** Shrewsbury features a large proportion (21–35 percent) of its potential commercial space with 5 or more acres of developable land.
- **Sites Available:** Shrewsbury actively makes lists of sites available and markets them to prospective developers.
- **Fast Track Permits:** Shrewsbury features an overlay district and markets fast track permitting to developers.
- **Citizen Participation in the Review Process:** Shrewsbury’s elected officials expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups and intervene, when needed, to rescue an at-risk development proposal.
- **Crime:** Crime in Shrewsbury is much lower than the typical CGM respondent.
- **Local Schools:** The local school system appears to be excellent, with higher English and math proficiency rates than the typical CGM. SAT scores are higher than the state average, and ACT scores are in alignment with the state average.
- **Tax Rates:** Shrewsbury has a single tax rate for commercial, industrial, and residential properties, which is lower than tax rates for the typical CGM respondent that also has a single tax rate.
- **Tax Delinquency:** Shrewsbury is more proactive in addressing tax delinquent properties than the CGM.

### Strengths among Less Important Location Factors

- **Proximity to Universities and Research:** Thirteen four-year colleges are located within ten miles of Shrewsbury, which are more than the typical CGM respondent.
- **Website:** Shrewsbury makes development information available on its website and allows for online filing of required documents.

## Shrewsbury’s Weaknesses or Potential “Deal-Breakers”

Shrewsbury’s weaknesses are the location factors with which Shrewsbury is experiencing some challenges. The factors in the *Very Important* group are the ones that the town should consider addressing first because they are the most critical potential “deal-breakers.” Again, the town should next consider those in the *Important* group, and finally the *Less Important* group.

Unlike the strengths or deal-makers, the list of weaknesses is **arranged in order of priority**. It is suggested that Shrewsbury review the prioritized lists and the detailed narrative about all location factors, while keeping in mind its economic development objectives and the resources available for addressing “deal-breakers” and other weaknesses. This report is an opportunity for an informed dialogue among colleagues and for establishing a roadmap to turn “deal-breakers” into “deal-makers.”

### Weakness among Very Important Location Factors

1. **Timeliness of Approvals:** The time it takes for a decision on a site plan review and an appeal ranges from four to seven weeks longer than the typical CGM. This is a critical “deal-breaker” for Shrewsbury and should be a first priority for remedying to be competitive in economic development.
2. **Infrastructure:** Water supply, sewer, and wastewater treatment infrastructure is good, but MassDEP and EPA regulations restricted capacity for current needs only and not for growth.
3. **Rents (Retail, Office Space):** Rents for retail and office space in the central and highway business district tend to be higher than the median rents among the CGM. In addition, the town offers no Class A or Class B office space.
4. **Highway Access:** One to 25 percent of Shrewsbury’s manufacturing sites and 26–49 percent of retail and office sites are within two miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway, which is much smaller than the CGM median response of 75 percent or greater.

### Weakness among Important Location Factors

5. **Predictable Permits:** Though the town provides other information for applicants, Shrewsbury does not offer any flowcharts or handbooks as technical support and information to make the permitting process more manageable, transparent, and predictable.
6. **Critical Mass Firms:** Shrewsbury is part of a regional economic development strategy, but does not have an economic development plan and has not identified any specific business sectors to target for recruitment and attraction. In addition, Shrewsbury does not have an industrial attraction policy that prioritizes how aggressively the town should pursue certain sectors. The town is working on an economic development plan that will be completed in Spring 2015.
7. **Industry Sensitivity:** Shrewsbury does not have a marketing program or strategy that engages local businesses or leverages local strengths.
8. **Cross Marketing:** Shrewsbury does not enlist existing companies to help with attracting new firms.
9. **Marketing Follow-Up:** Shrewsbury does not have a formal de-briefing or intervention process to follow up with current, past, or prospective firms.
10. **Public Transit:** The current level of service of public transit in Shrewsbury is lower than the CGM for manufacturing, retail, and office sites.
11. **Housing:** The cost of a single-family house and rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Shrewsbury tend to be higher than the typical CGM respondent. This is a cost disadvantage for prospective residents.
12. **Quality of Life (Site):** Shrewsbury offers few fine dining establishments and retail shops within one mile of available development sites.
13. **Complementary/Supplemental Business Services:** Shrewsbury does not have business services that are capable of working with emerging technical and scientific firms within its jurisdiction. However, these services are available regionally.

### Weakness among Less Important Location Factors

14. **Permitting Ombudsman (Efficiency of Permitting):** Though representatives from Shrewsbury attend seminars, the town does not provide in-house economic development training for staff and officials. In addition, the town has two people instead of a single person to work with applicants during the permitting process.
15. **Website (Webmaster):** Shrewsbury does not employ a designated webmaster or staff person to maintain the website.

## DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The following is a section-by-section analysis of the EDSAT results comparing Shrewsbury's self-reported responses to both the overall importance of each location factor and the median response among the CGM. Within each section are several related themes, where the symbols ●, ◐, and ○ indicate the relative importance of the theme to developers and businesses, as ranked by NAIOP and CoreNet Global location experts. The shaded circle (●) denotes a *Very Important* factor, the half-shaded circle (◐) denotes an *Important* factor, and the unshaded circle (○) denotes a *Less Important* factor.

Importance To Market			Your Performance Relative To Peers	
● Very Important	◐ Important	○ Less Important	Strong	Average
			Weak	No Comparison

This section of the report presents a tabular printout from the EDSAT. The results are displayed in four primary groupings of information:

- **Group 1** identifies location themes, such as Highway Access, and questions about specific location factors related to that theme. At the top of each table is a circle that represents the relative importance of a theme to location experts and businesses. A filled circle (●) indicates “Very Important,” a half-filled circle (◐) indicates “Important,” and an unfilled circle (○) indicates “Less Important.”
- **Group 2** shows Shrewsbury's responses to the EDSAT questions.
- **Group 3** is the median or majority (for yes/no questions) response among the municipalities that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire (the comparison group or CGM).
- **Group 4** is a series of green, yellow, or red blocks indicating how Shrewsbury compares to the CGM. There is a built-in function in EDSAT that allows a municipality to compare itself against a subset of the CGM by other criteria such as population, median income, or size of operating budget. For purposes of this analysis, however, Shrewsbury is compared with all the CGM.

Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets

Report of Ludlow as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question			Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	75%+	75%+
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	75%+	75%+
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	75%+	75%+
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes	yes	yes

Importance To Market: ● Very Important, ◐ Important, ○ Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers: Strong (Green), Average (Yellow), Weak (Red)





Group 1 points to the table header. Group 2 points to the 'Question' column. Group 3 points to the 'Comparison Group' column. Group 4 points to the '75%+' result in the first row.

## Section 1. Access to Customers/Markets

In order to minimize transportation costs and time-to-market, businesses want adequate access to uncongested transportation corridors for their shipping needs, customers, and employees. Highway access, congestion, and parking are *Very Important* factors in location decisions. Public transportation is *Important*, while proximity to airports, rail, and water transport are *Less Important*. The overall physical attractiveness of public spaces, enforcement of codes, and condition of housing and commercial real estate are *Important*, as they are indications of general economic health and quality of life in a community.

### A. Highway Access ●

Shrewsbury is well-positioned relative to the east-west roads of Interstate 290, U.S. Highway 20, and Route 9 and the north-south roads of Route 140 and Route 70, as all five pass through town. However, less than fifty percent of the town's available retail, manufacturing, and general office sites are within two miles of a major highway, which is low compared to the CGM. The town does impose some weight restrictions on streets or access roads.


Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	26-49%		75% or greater
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	1-25%		75% or greater
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	26-49%		75% or greater
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes		no






### B. Public Transit ◐

The current level of service of public transit in Shrewsbury is lower than the CGM. Approximately 25 percent or less of available manufacturing, retail, and general office space sites are within one quarter mile of a public transit stop, while the median percentage among the CGM for these types of sites is 50–74 percent. The Worcester Regional Transit Authority provides limited public transit service along Route 9 in the evenings (the final #15 bus leaves downtown Shrewsbury at 8:20 pm), and service is available only on Saturdays during the weekend.

The closest commuter rail stations include Westborough, Grafton, and Union Station/Worcester, all of which lie south of Shrewsbury. These lines are served by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail and Amtrak service in Worcester. There is no shuttle service from Shrewsbury to Amtrak.



Shrewsbury does not have a transit-oriented development strategy in its plan to attract businesses, which is on par with the CGM.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
5: What percentage of available sites for retail trade are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		75% or greater

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
6: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		50-74%
7: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		50-74%
8: Is there a transit-oriented development strategy in your plans for attracting new firms?	no		no
9: Is there a commuter rail or bus stop within 5 miles of your jurisdiction's boundaries?	yes		yes
10: Do you offer any shuttle services to other public commuting stations?	no		no
11: Is public transit service available on nights and weekends?	yes		yes

### C. Parking ●

On-site parking is available for 75 percent or more of the available retail, manufacturing, and general office sites in Shrewsbury. Like the CGM median, there are no hourly, daily, or monthly parking fees. It is likely that because of the adequate supply of on-site parking, the town does not offer parking facilities near developments sites and has not used state or federal infrastructure grants to improve parking in the town. All parking factors for Shrewsbury are similar to the CGM.








<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What percentage of available sites for retail trade have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
13: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
14: What percentage of available sites for general office space have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
15: Does your jurisdiction offer parking facilities near development sites?	no		no
16: Have you used state or federal infrastructure grants to improve parking in your jurisdiction?	no		no
17: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$ Hourly	0		0
18: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$ Daily	0		0
19: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$ Monthly	0		0

#### D. Traffic ●

Shrewsbury has an advantage over the CGM in that the town has access to a traffic engineer/planner on staff. The typical CGM respondent has access to a transportation consultant, but no on-staff engineer/planner.




The town requires firms or developers to mitigate traffic impacts beyond streets adjacent to the site and requires a traffic impact analysis for large development projects, both of which are also the case for most of the CGM.



Shrewsbury reports that the typical rush hour is “moderately congested,” which aligns with the CGM. Shrewsbury is working to ease congestion by coordinating the traffic signals on Route 9.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
20: Do you have regular access to a traffic engineer or transportation planner, such as one who is on staff or with a regional organization to which your jurisdiction is a member?	yes		no
21: Do you routinely use the services of a transportation consultant?	Yes		yes
22: Do you have access to traffic count data for the major roadways in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
23: Do you require firms or developers to provide traffic mitigation beyond the streets adjacent to the site? (e.g. installing traffic signals, metering flow)	yes		yes
24: How would you rate traffic into and out of your jurisdiction during a typical weekday rush hour?	Moderately congested		Moderately congested
25: What is the average speed of automobile commuter traffic during a typical weekday rush hour?	26–35 mph		26–35 mph
26: Do you require a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects?	yes		yes

#### E. Airport ○





Shrewsbury contains no general aviation airport. The closest regional airport, Worcester Regional Airport, is located 6–10 miles away. The nearest major airport, Logan Airport in Boston, is more than 31 miles away. The distance to Logan (40 miles) is farther than major airports among the typical CGM, but the time it takes to get to the airport is within the same range, and is accessible by public transportation from Shrewsbury.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	no		no
28: The closest regional airport is how many miles away?	6-10 miles		11-20 miles
29: The closest major/international airport is how many miles away?	31 miles or more		20-30 miles

30: Is the major/international airport accessible by public transportation?	yes		yes
31: How long does it take to drive to the major/international airport from your downtown?	61 minutes to 90 minutes		61 minutes to 90 minutes

## F. Rail

Commuter and intercity/interstate rail services in Shrewsbury are available through neighboring Worcester. In addition, the Grafton commuter rail stop lies just south of Shrewsbury city limits.



Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
32: Do you have rail freight service available?	yes		yes
33: Do you have intercity passenger rail service? Check all that apply.			
- Commuter	yes		no
- Intercity/Interstate(Amtrak)	yes		no
- no	no		yes










## G. Physical Attractiveness

With more than 20 parks and recreation facilities, Shrewsbury is an attractive suburban community. In fact, most of the western side of town is bordered by Lake Quinsigamond. Roughly four percent of the town's area includes waterways such as ponds and lakes. Five percent or less of the town's acreage is set aside for parks, which is less than the CGM average of six to 10 percent. The town does have an Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Nuisance codes are "very vigorously" enforced, and the town maintains public spaces such as streets and sidewalks near development sites "very vigorously", which greatly exceeds the CGM levels of "moderately and "vigorously/moderately" (respectively). There is no hotline for residents to report code violations, and the town does not involve its arts community in designing open spaces, which mirrors the CGM.


The town's housing stock and commercial and industrial buildings are in good condition and on par with the CGM. Overall, Shrewsbury appears to be an attractive and desirable community in which to live and do business.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
34: To what extent do you enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties / abandoned vehicles / trash and rubbish disposal within your jurisdiction?	Very vigorously		Moderately
35: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain streets, sidewalks, parks, etc., near available development sites?	Very vigorously		Moderately

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
36: Is there a hotline available for reporting code violations and maintenance needs within your jurisdiction?	no		no
37: Is there a system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction?	no		no
38: Do you involve the arts community in the design of open space (street furniture, murals, etc.)?	no		no
39: What percentage of the acreage within your jurisdiction is reserved for parks?	0-5%		6-10%
40: What percentage of your housing stock is considered dilapidated?	0-5%		0-5%
41: What percentage of your commercial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
42: What percentage of commercial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	6-10%		6-10%
43: What percentage of your industrial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	6-10%		6-10%
44: What percentage of industrial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	6-10%		6-10%

## H. Water Transportation

Shrewsbury has no water transportation, which aligns with the CGM.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
45: Do you have water based transportation facilities within your jurisdiction? Check all that apply.			










## Section 2. Concentration of Businesses (Agglomeration)

Agglomeration refers to the number of complementary and supplemental services and related firms—including academic institutions—that are available within a jurisdiction to support new or existing companies. A concentration of similar or supporting companies creates a critical mass of businesses within an industry, making it easier for that industry to thrive in the local community, regionally, or on the state level. The scale of agglomeration within a jurisdiction can be enhanced by the intensity of its efforts to attract companies, its coordination of marketing plans with regional or state efforts, cross marketing among stakeholder organizations, and follow-up with existing and potential businesses.

### A. Complementary/Supplemental Business Services

Shrewsbury has “moderately” active business associations, including the Corridor Nine Chamber of Commerce and the Lakeway Business District Association, which works closely with the economic development team to advance economic development initiatives for existing and prospective businesses. The town benefits from being located right across the lake from the technology center of Worcester and is part of the Greater Boston region. The town also includes CPA/financial services, specialized law firms such as commercial and intellectual property, and branches of major commercial banks. Shrewsbury lacks registered specialized business services such as venture capital firms and business planning firms that are capable of working with emerging technology and scientific firms. The town does not have a technology incubator or a cooperative space for business startups.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: Is your local chamber of commerce or business association actively involved in the economic development activities of your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
2: Does your jurisdiction have an active volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit center for economic development?	yes		yes
3: Is there an incubator or other form of cooperative and supportive space for start-up businesses in your jurisdiction?	no		no
4: Are there CPA, business advisory and financial services firms in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
5: Are there law firms in your jurisdiction specializing in commercial law, intellectual property rights, and patents?	yes		yes
6: Are there branches of major commercial banks in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
7: To what extent are the business services (e.g. venture capital, business planning, specialized recruiting, etc.) in your jurisdiction capable of working with emerging technical and scientific firms?	No such business services exist		Moderately capable







## B. Critical Mass Firms













Shrewsbury has taken initiative and is working on a local economic development plan. In addition, the jurisdiction takes part in a regional economic development plan through the Central Massachusetts Regional Commission and the 495/MetroWest Partnership. Shrewsbury has not yet tailored a plan to recruit and attract targeted business sectors for its jurisdiction, as it is aware of the infrastructure constraints identified in Section 3.A.

Until it has an industrial attraction and recruitment policy in place, the town runs the risk of unfocused and inefficient marketing and opportunity responses. Identifying target sectors now will allow Shrewsbury to strategically and proactively shape the local economic landscape, even if all the infrastructure requirements are not in place. To do this will require knowing what industries can be targeted with the available resources. In addition, the town should improve its knowledge the existing businesses, what they need to grow, and which of their strengths that can be leveraged to attract related or complementary firms.

At this time, Shrewsbury does not seem to have a critical mass of the firms that it intends to target for future development. Some of the industries it has identified through regional planning efforts, like Life Sciences and Alternative Energy, may need similar businesses to create a critical mass in the local economy. Likewise, if a targeted industry, like Manufacturing or Financial Services, has a strong presence within the community, it can be leveraged to attract new businesses. Shrewsbury should work with local businesses and residents to identify targeted businesses and industries that make sense for its unique economy.





Another means of identifying target sectors is to align Shrewsbury's priorities with those of regional or state economic development agencies. For example Manufacturing, Alternative Energy, Information Technology, Life Sciences/Biotechnology, and Travel and Tourism have been identified by as regional and state priorities. Most of these have been identified by Shrewsbury for targeting through its participation in regional planning agencies. By aligning with these priorities, Shrewsbury can increase its visibility within these sectors and participate in marketing and recruiting initiatives implemented by the region and the state.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
8: Does your jurisdiction have an up-to-date development strategy, overall economic development plan (OEDP), or an economic development plan within your community master plan?	no		yes
9: Is your jurisdiction part of a county or regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)?	yes		yes
10: Does your state have a development strategy or economic development plan?	yes		yes
11: If yes, are there firms within specific industry types or sectors that are targeted in your jurisdiction's, your county's or your state's development strategy?	yes		yes
12: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your municipality's development strategy? (Your Municipality)	Information Technology; Financial Services; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare; Alternative Energy		

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
13: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your municipality's development strategy? Other, please specify (Your Municipality)			
14: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your region/county's development strategy? (Regional/County)	Alternative Energy; Travel and Tourism; Information Technology; Financial Services; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare		
15: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your region/county's development strategy? Other, please specify (Regional/County)			
16: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your state's development strategy? (State)	Alternative Energy; Travel and Tourism; Information Technology; Financial Services; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare		
17: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your state's development strategy? (State)			
18: Which of the following jurisdictions have development specialists to assist in interpreting the needs of these clusters? (Choose all that apply)	State; Regional/County; Your Municipality		State Regional/ County Your Municipality
19: How aggressive is your industrial attraction policy?	Weak		Moderate





### C. Cross Marketing

Shrewsbury engages local and regional business organizations, but not existing businesses, to participate in marketing your jurisdiction and attracting new firms. Though this is on par with the CGM, not leveraging existing businesses is a disadvantage for Shrewsbury. Existing businesses can share first-hand with a prospective business how it would fill a market need, make valuable connections, and succeed in Shrewsbury. If Shrewsbury chooses to increase its participation in regional and state programs, the town will gain more extensive resources and increased visibility that a local effort alone could not deliver cost-effectively.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
20: Do you actively enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms?	no		no
21: Do you engage local and regional business organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
22: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
23: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes		yes

#### **D. Marketing Follow-up**





Currently, the town does not de-brief prospective businesses after they have made their decisions to locate or not locate in Shrewsbury. By not doing so, the town misses out on real-time information that can be used to fine-tune marketing strategies and economic development practices. The town also does not have a formal process for contacting local firms about their satisfaction with doing business in Shrewsbury. Without regular contact, the town misses out on addressing the business needs of companies that have already invested in the community. Though Shrewsbury aligns with the CGM in its responses, these marketing follow-up efforts represent effective ways to shape a brand and positively influence the cognitive maps that current and prospective businesses have of your town.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
24: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
25: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose <u>not</u> to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
26: Do you have a formal procedure for contacting existing local firms about their satisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no
27: Do you have a formal procedure for intervening when early news surfaces about firm dissatisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no

#### **E. Proximity to Universities and Research**

No four-year colleges are located within Shrewsbury, however 13 are within ten miles of the town, which are more than the CGM. There is no community college within the town boundaries; the nearest community colleges are Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester and Massachusetts Bay Community College in Framingham. Regarding vocational-technical high schools, Shrewsbury sends residents to Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School in Marlborough.

Once the town has identified priority business sectors to attract, town officials and the economic development staff should meet with the four-year colleges, the community college, and the technical high school to align curriculums with the skills needed by the business sectors being recruited.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
28: How many major public or private four-year college or universities are located within your jurisdiction?	0		0
29: How many major public or private four-year college or universities are located within 10 miles of your jurisdiction?	13		2
30: How many community colleges are located within your jurisdiction?	0		0
31: How many vocational/technical schools are located within your jurisdiction?	0		1

### Section 3. Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)












The cost of land to a firm includes two *Very Important* factors: Infrastructure and Rent. Updating civil, utility, and telecommunications infrastructure represents significant expenses for a firm to incur. Therefore, if a municipality does not already have adequate capacity in place, a potential firm could decide to locate in another municipality with adequate capacity. Rents are *Very Important* as they contribute heavily to operating expenses. Location experts consider the quality of available space and amount of available land for development *Important* factors.

#### A. Infrastructure ●

The capacity of various infrastructure systems in Shrewsbury ranges from “capacity for current needs only” to “sufficient capacity for growth and reliable service”. The landline and cellular capacity and broadband data capacity are sufficient for growth and reliable service, but the town identified a need to better market its advantages in this area. This would be an advantage for technology and research-based firms, which need reliable bandwidth. However, the water, public sewer, and wastewater treatment infrastructure has capacity for current needs only.

These infrastructure constraints are potential “deal-breakers” for Shrewsbury as all businesses need these services. Current United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulations limit the town’s ability to use current infrastructure to its maximum capacity. These regulations would prohibit the ability for new businesses that require significant water, wastewater treatment, and sewer capacity to locate in Shrewsbury. It is recommended that Shrewsbury leverage its participation in the 495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan to lobby the US EPA and MassDEP for conditions by which the town can increase its infrastructure availability to meet development needs. Until availability of water, wastewater treatment, and sewer services are assured, the town will be limited in what types of businesses it can attract. As Shrewsbury creates an economic development plan and identifies target industries, it should focus its recruitment efforts on industries like warehousing and data centers that will minimize the load impacts on existing water, sewer, and wastewater treatment facilities.


Electricity rates in New England tend to be higher than other regions in the country because it has to import most of its fuels. The statewide average retail costs (cents per kilowatt-hour) in Massachusetts in August 2013 were 15.05 for residential consumers, 13.95 for commercial users, and 13.03 for industrial users. The reported rates for Shrewsbury outperform the state of Massachusetts. The local utility, Shrewsbury Electric Light & Cable Company (SELCO) sets competitive rates compared to the rest of New England. This is an advantage and should be highlighted in town recruitment efforts.









<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Are there significant limitations to any of your existing infrastructure systems? - Water Supply	Capacity for current needs only		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
2: Public Sewer	Capacity for current needs only		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Capacity for current needs only		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
4: Natural Gas	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
5: Electric Power	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
6: Data/Telecommunications - Land Lines	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
7: Data/Telecommunications - Cellular	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
8: Data/Telecommunications - Fiber optic / Cable / DSL	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
9: What is the average cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Residential	.11272		16.23
10: What is the average cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Commercial	.11661		15.20
11: What is the average cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Industrial	.09243 + \$4.14 /KW Demand		13.03

## B. Rents ●

Rents for retail space in the central and highway business district tend to be higher than the median rents among the CGM. Rents for general office space in the central and highway business districts are also higher in Shrewsbury. However, rents for manufacturing space are lower than the CGM.




The distribution of the classes of office space in Shrewsbury is limited, where 100 percent is Class C. These percentages are worse than the CGM and represent a disadvantage when businesses consider this location factor because businesses and developers would have to invest more to update and upgrade the Class C office space.


<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	17.50		12

13: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	25.50		11
14: What is the current average square foot cost for existing manufacturing space (Triple Net/Lease)?	5.50		6
15: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS A			13
16: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS B			12.00
17: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS C	16		8.50
18: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS A			
19: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS B			8.50
20: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)? CLASS C	16		7
21: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS A	0		15
22: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS B	0		40
23: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS C	100		40

### C. Quality of Available Space



Shrewsbury's available development sites feature fewer brownfields as compared to the CGM, which is an advantage because this represents lower risk to developers and new business owners. Between 21 and 35 percent of available development sites is considered greenfield, which also reduces risks and increases flexibility to developers. Underutilized shopping centers comprise a lower percentage (1–10 percent) of available development sites when compared to the CGM. Overall the supply of available space is low, but its quality is high.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
24: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered contaminated or brownfield sites?	1-10%		21-35%
25: What experience does your jurisdiction have with the redevelopment of contaminated or brownfield sites?	Limited		Limited
26: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered vacant or severely underutilized shopping centers?	1-10%		11-20%

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
27: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered unused open land or greenfield sites?	21-35%		21-35%

## D. Land (space)

The amount of developable land zoned for commercial/industrial, amount of industrial space, and office space is similar to the CGM. The proportion of parcels five acres or larger that are available for commercial development is 21–35 percent, which is higher than the CGM (11–20 percent). This represents a strong advantage for attracting large developments to your jurisdiction to increase your commercial and industrial base.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
28: Approximately how much vacant developable land in your jurisdiction is currently zoned for commercial/industrial uses?	151-300 acres		151-300 acres
29: Approximately how much vacant useable industrial or warehouse space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	250,001-500,000 sq. feet		250,001-500,000 sq. feet
30: Approximately how much vacant useable office space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1-250,000 sq. feet		1-250,000 sq. feet
31: What proportion of the parcels available for industrial development or large scale commercial development are of 5 acres or more?	21-35%		11-20%

## Section 4. Labor

The effect of labor factors on location decisions runs somewhat contrary to popular belief. An available labor force that is adequately trained (Workforce Composition) is a *Very Important* factor, while the cost of labor is *Important* and the presence of strong unions is *Less Important*. Conventional wisdom often holds that municipalities with higher labor costs and stronger unions negatively impact a firm’s location decision. However, if the workforce is adequately skilled, these factors are not as strong “deal-breakers” as the general belief holds.

Employers are willing to pay for the necessary skills. Workforce training resources is *Less Important* relative to other location factors. However, having a technically trained workforce whose skills align with industries a municipality wants to attract is a valuable selling point.

### A. Labor Costs

The prevailing average hourly wages for semi-skilled workers and mid-level clerical workers are within the same range as the median among the CGM. Similarly, the annual salary for public high school teachers is similar. Shrewsbury has no local minimum wage (also referred to as a living wage), which would be viewed as a cost savings advantage by businesses.



<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for semi-skilled, blue-collar manufacturing workers?	\$12.26 - \$17.25		\$12.26 - \$17.25
2: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for mid-level clerical workers?	\$12.26 - \$17.25		\$12.26 - \$17.25
3: What is the prevailing average annual salary for public high school teachers?	\$70,001 or more		\$70,001 or more
4: Is there a local minimum or living wage statute?	no		no

## B. Workforce Composition ●

The proportions of unskilled and managerial workers in Shrewsbury align with the CGM. Notably, the proportion of semi-skilled and technically skilled workers (both at 1–25 percent) is lower than the CGM, but the proportion of professional workers (26–49 percent) is higher than the CGM and represents the largest group, indicating that the workforce is highly educated. This is a strong advantage for Shrewsbury.

According to the United States Social Security Administration (SSA) and the United States Department of Labor (DOL), the workforce categories are defined as follows<sup>3</sup>:

**Unskilled** work requires little to no judgment on the part of the worker, does not require specific vocational training, and can be learned in 30 days or less (SSA).

**Semi-skilled** work requires attention to detail, alertness, and the ability to control risks through testing or inspecting (SSA). These jobs can be learned in three to six months.





**Technically skilled** work requires judgment and critical thinking to make determinations on materials, calculations, measurements, or adjustments; may also be required to work with people, facts, figures, or abstract ideas (SSA).

**Professional** work requires advanced intellectual knowledge and consistent exercise of discretion and judgment, acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction (DOL), generally in the range of earning a college degree, license, or certificate.

**Managerial** work requires the ability to select and train employees, direct, supervise, and appraise work of employees; make recommendations about techniques, materials, and equipment; planning and budgeting; and monitoring legal compliance measures (DOL).




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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/cfr20/404/404-1568.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-1568.htm) (accessed on 12/19/2013);  
[http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/fairpay/fs17d\\_professional.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/fairpay/fs17d_professional.htm) (accessed on 12/19/2013);  
[http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/fairpay/fs17b\\_executive.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/fairpay/fs17b_executive.pdf) (accessed on 12/19/2013)

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
5: What percentage of your workforce is Unskilled?	1-25%		1-25%
6: What percentage of your workforce is Semi-skilled	1-25%		between 1-25% and 26-49%
7: What percentage of your workforce is Technically skilled	1-25%		26-49%
8: What percentage of your workforce is Managerial	1-25%		1-25%
9: What percentage of your workforce is Professional	26-49%		1-25%
10: What percentage of your workforce are current English language learners?	0-10%		0-10%



### C. Unions ○

There has not been a major strike or union organizing drive in Shrewsbury within the last three years. The labor unions have a presence in the town that aligns with the CGM. Overall, union activity is one of the least important location factors for businesses.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
11: Have any employers in your jurisdiction had a major strike or work stoppage within the last three years?	no		no
12: Has there been a major union organizing drive among public or private workers in the last 3 years?	no		no
13: Do labor unions have a significant presence in the labor market of your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat











### D. Labor (Available) ●

As suggested in Section 4.B, Shrewsbury's highly-educated workforce is attractive to potential employers. Over 85 percent of residents over age 25 have at least a high school diploma, and over 51 percent have at least a bachelor's degree, which outperforms the CGM.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
14: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a high school diploma?	85% or greater		85% or greater
15: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a bachelor's degree?	51% or greater		21-35%

## E. Workforce Training ○

Shrewsbury works with area high schools and vocational-technical schools in response to skills development and should re-evaluate this strategy after the town has finalized its priority business sectors, as discussed in Section 2.E. The town does have an adult education program available to residents. The town does not support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
16: Which of the following workforce training resources do you interact with to respond to skill development needs of firms?			
- Regional employment board or state employment services department	no		
- Area High schools	no		
- Voc-tech schools or community colleges	yes		
- Human service or nonprofit career training centers	no		
17: Do you support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training?	no		yes
18: Is there an adult education program readily available to residents of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes

## Section 5. Municipal Process

The municipal process section covers several themes of marketing and permitting. When it comes to marketing themselves, jurisdictions that are aggressive and collaborate with local firms may be at an advantage in attracting new investment. Those firms can speak to interested companies and investors about first-hand experiences and market conditions, and advise municipal leaders about industries with which they are intimately familiar. Additionally, a municipality needs to establish a transparent and efficient permitting process to minimize business startup time and costs. Among the factors examined in this theme, timeliness of approvals is *Very Important* to location experts, and the remaining themes are *Important* with the exception of the Permitting Ombudsman, which is *Less Important*.

### A. Industrial Sensitivity ◀

Shrewsbury does not have a marketing program based on existing core strengths and industry concentration (most of the CGM does not). However, as the town identify sectors for priority attraction and recruitment, a marketing program should be developed and updated accordingly and include the following elements: business needs identified by location experts, local business leaders who will speak on behalf of the town, a strategy for engaging minority business owners and cultural resources, and a quick response team to respond to negative data or stories about Shrewsbury.

A quick response team can also take a strategic look at branding Shrewsbury. Residents, local businesses, and prospective businesses alike have a cognitive map (i.e., a preconceived image or reputation) of your town, and these cognitive maps can be incomplete, inaccurate, or outdated. Branding is a way to proactively disseminate current and up-to-date information about the town and dispel or correct old impressions. Shrewsbury should encourage

collaboration among its businesses, trade associations, municipal staff/leadership, and residents to develop this marketing program. This type of collaboration signals to prospective businesses that indeed a municipality welcomes and understands business and that it has identified priorities to grow the local economy.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on the needs identified by industrial or office location specialists?	no		no
2: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, or industry concentrations?	no		no
3: Do you have a quick response team available when negative data, stories, or incidents about your jurisdiction make the news?	no		no
4: Do you actively engage local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of your jurisdiction?	no		no
5: Do you have a strategy for engaging your jurisdiction's racial or ethnic populations in unique businesses, festivals, etc., as a way to attract regional niche shopping?	no		no

## **B. Sites Available**

Unlike most CGM respondents, Shrewsbury boasts a list of available development sites. This list benefits the town in a couple of ways. First, it provides on-hand information to give to prospective businesses and developers when they inquire about sites. Second, online publication of the list allows location experts or business owners doing research on new locations to easily access information about availability in Shrewsbury. The town's most recent online list is more than six months old (as of the date of writing this report).

Shrewsbury has an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties, which will help to keep land available for redevelopment as needed. Though the town does not have an active strategy for reclaiming vacant or underutilized shopping plazas, the need for such a strategy is low, given the low percentage of vacant/underutilized shopping plazas in the jurisdiction (see Section 3.C).

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
6: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	yes		yes
7: Is there a readily accessible, up-to-date, complete list of sites that are available for development in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
8: Do you maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, or agents with sites in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
9: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses?	yes		yes
10: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties?	yes		no

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
11: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming vacant or underutilized shopping plazas?	no		no

### C. Timeliness of Approvals ●










Shrewsbury possesses an advantage in that it takes 5–8 weeks to review a special permit for new construction, which outpaces the CGM. With the exception of zoning variances or building permits on new construction, all remaining permitting processes in Shrewsbury are longer than the median durations among the CGM. For example, self-reported timelines are as follows:

- Site Plan review averages four weeks longer for new construction and is at least 29 weeks longer for existing structures
- Zoning Variance is at least 29 weeks longer for existing structures than the CGM and an average of 36 weeks (approximately nine months) longer than new construction
- Special Permits are at least 25 weeks longer for existing structures than the CGM and an average of 36 weeks longer than new construction
- Building permits are at least 21 weeks longer for existing structures than the CGM and an average of 28.5 weeks (approximately seven months) longer than new construction
- The Appeals Process is an average of four weeks longer for new construction and at least 43 weeks longer than CGM for existing structures

The time periods for existing structures also include time to completion/occupancy. The disparities in durations range from four weeks months to nine or more months longer than the CGM for new construction. Shrewsbury has no control over the time from completion of the review process to the completion or occupation of the building. However, the town can investigate the accuracy of the turnaround times for improvements to existing structures to see how they compare to new construction and to the CGM. Delays can cost a company valuable time and revenues because they cannot get their products, services, and research/development to market ahead of competitors. The town can evaluate this by creating a feedback and reporting system to identify when a developer first contacts the planning department, the date of submitting the initial application, what key elements are missing or holding up the review process, and when the permitting decision is finalized. Strong empirical data such as this will help the town identify if it needs to streamline the permitting process and in what areas it should provide additional support to companies as they are developing new or upgrading existing structures. It is recommended that the town provide a platform for open, honest, anonymous feedback from existing developers and property owners about the permitting process as well as involve them in a collaborative feedback and reporting process. See Sections 5.D and 5.G for additional recommendations.

Occasionally, one or a few complicated projects can create the perception within the business community that the permitting process is protracted. By looking into the empirical data, these projects may be discovered. While the perception may be based on a small number of projects, in economic development, perception is reality. It would benefit any community, including Shrewsbury, to correct the misperception through outreach and marketing.



Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
12: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Site plan review	9-12 weeks		5-8 weeks

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
13: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
14: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Special permit	5-8 weeks		9-12 weeks
15: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
16: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Appeals process	9-12 weeks		5-8 weeks
17: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Site plan review	37-48 weeks		5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Zoning variance	37-48 weeks		5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Special permit	37-48 weeks		9-12 weeks
20: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Building permit	25-36 weeks		0-4 weeks
21: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Appeals process	37-48 weeks		5-8 weeks

#### **D. Predictable Permits**

Shrewsbury offers formalized checklists about its permitting processes but does not offer flowcharts or handbooks to supplement those checklists. While in alignment with the CGM, the additional tools provide technical support and information to make permitting more manageable and transparent for applicants, particularly given the currently reported length of the town's permitting processes (see Section 5.C). The town also does not currently allow for a single format where permit applicants meet with all relevant boards and commissions at one time to present their proposed project, but Shrewsbury has the capacity to make this available. This saves time and costs for the applicant and yet would not preclude the boards from deliberating independently. We recommend making this capability available and promoting it in your marketing efforts.

It is strongly recommended that as the town reviews whether to streamline its permitting processes, the boards and commissions and their staff create additional tools for assisting applicants and formalize the process for making single presentations of development proposals. In addition, Shrewsbury should consider formalizing preliminary reviews of applications to streamline the overall permitting process.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
22: Do you provide a checklist of permitting requirements to prospective developers?	yes		yes
23: Do you provide a flowchart of the permitting process to prospective developers?	no		no

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
24: Do you provide a development handbook to prospective developers?	no		no
25: Do you allow for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority?	no		no

### **E. Fast Track Permits**

Shrewsbury features a distinct advantage over the CGM in that it has an overlay district that allows for expedited permitting and it markets fast track permitting to potential firms and developers. Your town could expand on that advantage by pre-permitting development in certain districts, which will further streamline your permitting process and attract desirable uses to your jurisdiction.








<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
26: Do you pre-permit development in certain districts?	no		no
27: Are there any publicly or cooperatively owned industrial parks in your jurisdiction that have their own expedited permitting authority?	no		no
28: Do you have an "overlay" district that allows expedited permitting of certain uses?	yes		no
29: Do you market "fast track" permitting to potential developers or firms?	yes		no

### **F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process**

Neighborhood groups and abutters slow the permitting process only “somewhat” in Shrewsbury. Your town can help ease the concerns of residents, create a business-friendly environment, and encourage a stronger, more resilient local economy by inviting existing residents and businesses to help identify the industry sectors and the types of businesses that the town wants to attract. Given that the lands in Shrewsbury consist primarily of residential development, it is crucial to engage residents and businesses to determine their strengths and preferences for how they move forward in a shared, town-wide vision for growth.

Currently town officials facilitate dialogues with community groups “very much” and take the lead in initiating the dialogue and with intervening when a development proposal is at risk. The upfront investment in engagement is a time-consuming and often difficult task that involves two-way education and information sharing. However, a successful result is a community that supports the town’s economic development plans and greatly lowers the risk of controversy and delays after a project is underway.

Shrewsbury has established a specific time frame and procedure for abutter and neighborhood response during the initial stage of the development process and offers multiple opportunities for review and comment. Establishing a time frame and procedure will greatly lower the risk to developers when considering Shrewsbury as a place to invest.



<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
30: To what extent do abutters slow the permitting process in your jurisdiction?	Somewhat		Somewhat
31: To what extent do organized neighborhood groups slow the permitting process?	Very little		Somewhat
32: To what extent do elected officials in your jurisdiction expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups?	Very much		Very little
33: Do you establish a specific time frame and procedure for abutter or neighborhood response in the initial stage of the process?	yes		yes
34: Do interested parties get multiple opportunities for review and comment during the various development review processes?	yes		yes
35: Has a development proposal in your jurisdiction been stopped by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the past 5 years?	yes		yes
36: Have officials from your jurisdiction intervened to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the last 5 years?	yes		no

## G. Permitting Ombudsman ○


















Local leadership is empowered to ensure the efficiency of the planning process. Shrewsbury even has a development cabinet/team that reviews major development proposals. These factors are advantages for the town as they often help to reduce back and forth between the applicant and the committee.




On a positive note, the review process for local licenses is comparable to the CGM, and Shrewsbury provides technical assistance for businesses that need to apply to for state or federal permits and licenses. Often technical assistance and support can be as simple as putting the applicant in touch with the appropriate offices/people at the state or federal agency. The permitting ombudsman's role is to be a liaison to applicants for local, state, and federal processes, making it easier for the applicant to navigate the permitting process at all levels.

Certain ombudsman roles and responsibilities informally reside with Shrewsbury staff, such as preliminary review of permit applications by members of the multiple commissions. The town should consider formalizing the preliminary review process with a single contact person to improve the efficiency of permitting process for both the application and the commissions. Other ombudsman activities, though lower on the scale of importance for location experts, will improve permit turnaround times. These include providing a formal training program for development staff, boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials to regularly review critical adjustments in policy and regulations. Taking advantage of these easily-accessible opportunities will have a significant positive impact on the permitting process and allow Shrewsbury to leverage regional and state training opportunities.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
37: Does the chief executive officer of your jurisdiction play a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		no
38: Are there other local officials empowered to ensure the efficiency of your local permitting process?	yes		yes



<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
39: Is there a "development cabinet" or "development team" that is convened to review major developments?	yes		yes
40: Do you have an established training program for development staff that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
41: Do you have an established training program for boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
42: If yes, approximately how long (in weeks) is your local licensing process for businesses?	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
43: Is your jurisdiction involved in the process for businesses that require state or federal permitting or licensing?	yes		yes
44: Do you provide technical assistance for businesses in the state or federal permit or license application process?	yes		yes
45: Does your jurisdiction require any local licenses for specific businesses or industries?			
- General license for all businesses	no		no
- Auto dealership	no		no
- Barber shop	no		no
- Bar/Tavern	no		no
- Beauty salon	no		no
- Child care services	no		no
- Construction contractor	no		no
- Home health care	no		no
- Massage therapist	no		no
- Real estate agent/broker	no		no
- Restaurant	no		no



Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
- Skilled Trades (electrician, plumber, etc)	no		no
- Other, please specify	yes		no
46: other:	Garage		

## Section 6. Quality of Life (Community)

The quality of life within the community is an *Important* location factor because companies want to be able to offer employees a safe community with affordable housing, good schools, and a rich selection of cultural and recreational opportunities.

### A. Cultural and Recreational Amenities





The selection of cultural and recreational resources in Shrewsbury is similar to the CGM. Your town has no professional sports team, major museum, golf course, professional theater company, civic center, or dance company. However, these cultural and recreational resources are available regionally. Shrewsbury has public beaches and boating facilities within five miles thanks to its location on Lake Quinsigamond.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: Is there a professional sports team resident within your jurisdiction?	no		no
2: Is there a major art, science or historical museum?	no		no
3: Is there a professional repertory theater company?	no		no
4: Is there a civic center, arena or major concert hall?	no		no
5: Is there a golf course within your jurisdiction?	no		yes
6: Is there a symphony orchestra, opera, or ballet company?	no		no
7: Are there public beaches or boating activities within 5 miles of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes

### B. Crime







Crime is very low in Shrewsbury compared to the CGM.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
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8: What was the residential burglary rate per 100,000 last year in your jurisdiction?	74		310
9: What was the auto theft rate per 100,000 last year?	15		113
10: What was the robbery rate per 100,000 last year?	2		40
11: What was the homicide rate per 100,000 last year?	1		3


### C. Housing





















The cost of a single-family house and rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Shrewsbury tend to be higher than the CGM. This is a disadvantage. Despite the higher housing costs, the rate of home ownership among residents is 66–75 percent, and the percent of homes for sale is less than three percent. The vacancy rate of rental housing is less than three percent, indicating that the supply of housing is low and might not be sufficient to absorb additional commercial and/or industrial development unless housing is a part of that development.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What was the median sale price of a single family home in your jurisdiction last year?	\$351,000-\$450,000		\$251,000-\$350,000
13: What was the median rent for a two bedroom apartment in your jurisdiction last year?	\$1001-\$1250		\$801-\$1000
14: What is the home ownership rate?	66-75%		66-75%
15: What is the vacancy rate for rental housing?	Less than 3%		3-5%
16: What percent of homes are for sale?	Less than 3%		Less than 3%
17: Approximately what proportion of the major officers of firms located in your jurisdiction live in the community?	Some		Some

### D. Local Schools

The local K-12 school system appears to be excellent. Eighty-one percent or more of students test at least proficient in English and math, and at least 75 percent of graduating seniors go on to a four-year college. These rates are higher than the CGM. The average combined SAT score in Shrewsbury was 1675 in 2012, which is higher than the Massachusetts state average of 1530 (2011–2012). Similarly, composite score for the ACT was 24.1 in Shrewsbury and 24.1 statewide in 2012.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$10,001-\$12,000		\$10,001-\$12,000



Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
19: Does your state mandate an assessment or proficiency test as a prerequisite for high school graduation?	yes		yes
20: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in English?	81% or greater		66-80%
21: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in Mathematics?	81% or greater		66-80%
22: If yes, are the tests used as a measure of performance within your local school district for teacher assessments or teacher evaluations?	no		no
23: What percentage of your jurisdiction's K-12 students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch last year?	1-25%		1-25%
24: What was the average combined (reading, math, and writing) SAT score last year?	1675		
25: What was the average composite score (English, math, reading, and science) for the ACT last year?	24.1		
26: What percentage of high school freshmen normally graduate within 5 years?	81%-94%		81%-94%
27: What is the high school dropout rate last year?	0%		1-25%
28: Are there any schools in your jurisdiction that are currently deemed "underperforming?"	no		no
29: What percentage of high school graduates from last year's class went on to a four-year college?	75% or greater		50-74%
30: Are there any charter schools in your jurisdiction?	no		no
31: What types of private schools are there in your jurisdiction?			
- Parochial	yes		
- Non-sectarian	yes		
- Boarding	no		

## Section 7. Quality of Life (Site)

This section looks at the amenities and services available within one mile of existing development sites. Having a variety of amenities, restaurants, stores, and services near employment centers enhances the location, adds convenience, and allows employees more social opportunities.

## A. Amenities

The amenities within one mile of development sites are on par or worse than the CGM. Most sites in Shrewsbury have fast food restaurants and day cares within a mile. Shrewsbury features few fine dining establishments and retail shops, which reflects Shrewsbury's current role as a residential community due to its proximity to Worcester.





Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fast food restaurant	Most		Most
2: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fine dining	Few		Some
3: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Day care	Most		Most
4: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Retail shops	Some		Most








## Section 8. Business Incentives

Business incentives (e.g. tax and financial) are *Important* factors when companies are evaluating jurisdictions for location. However, contrary to conventional wisdom, these incentives are not the first factors on which an investor makes a location decision. Factors such as infrastructure, workforce composition, and timeliness of permitting are the highest levels of importance, representing “deal-breakers”: a municipality must be adequate in these areas before a business will advance negotiations. Therefore, investors value a broader portfolio of business incentives as possible “deal-closers”, but might not be initially attracted by them.

## A. State






Shrewsbury businesses are eligible for many state incentives: investment tax credits, job training tax credits, research and development tax credits, low interest loans, loan guarantees, and workforce training grants. However, the town takes little advantage of them.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: Are businesses in your jurisdiction eligible for any of the following special state tax incentives? Check all that apply.			
- Investment tax credits	yes		no
- Job training tax credits	yes		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	yes		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	yes		no


<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
- Loan guarantees	yes		no
- Equity financing	no		no
- Workforce training grants	yes		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
2: Are businesses in your jurisdiction eligible for any of the following special state tax incentives? Other, please specify			
3: To what extent does your jurisdiction actively take advantage of any special state business incentives?	Somewhat		Somewhat
4: Does your state allow for priority funding for distressed economic areas?	yes		yes

## B. Local

Shrewsbury does not offer property tax abatements to new or existing businesses, and the town does not offer any local business incentives. The town does offer tax increment financing (TIF), but it may need financing to meet EPA and MassDEP guidelines for expansion, given the town's current water and wastewater infrastructure constraints. The town might also consider offering financing assistance to incoming businesses to improve their likelihood of locating in Shrewsbury. Other financial business incentives might be available through Shrewsbury's participation in MetroWest 495 Compact Plan.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
5: Does your jurisdiction offer existing or new businesses property tax abatement? Existing businesses	no		no
6: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
7: Does your jurisdiction offer existing or new businesses property tax abatement? New businesses	no		no
8: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
9: Who negotiates the tax abatement?			
10: Does your jurisdiction offer any of the following incentives for businesses to locate in your jurisdiction? (Check all that apply)			

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
- Revolving loan fund	no		no
- Loan guarantees	no		no
- Revenue bonds	no		no
- Equity participation	no		no
- Business district group loans	no		no
- None	yes		no
- Investment tax credits	no		no
- Job training tax credits	no		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	no		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	no		no
- Workforce training grants	no		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
11: other:			
12: Does your jurisdiction actively pursue federal and/or state programs designed to assist in attracting and retaining businesses?	yes		yes
13: Does your jurisdiction use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other programs to provide tax breaks to businesses?	yes		yes
14: Does your jurisdiction grant TIFs or similar programs for retail development?	no		no
15: Does your jurisdiction assist in securing financing for businesses with commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms?	no		yes
16: Do you actively try to attract local, state, and federal facilities, including post offices, to your jurisdiction?	no		no
17: Is any part of your jurisdiction in a designated Enterprise Zone?	no		no










Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
18: Do you participate in a regional brownfield revolving loan fund or offer your own?	No brownfields funds utilized		Regional

## Section 9. Tax Rates









A tax rate is another cost factor that has traditionally been considered a business “deal-breaker”. Municipalities often thought that if tax rates were too high, then it would have difficulty attracting businesses. However, like business incentives, the tax rate is not one of the *Very Important* location factors. If the *Very Important* factors are satisfied, a business will likely ask for a more favorable tax rate during later stage negotiations. However, negotiations are unlikely to get to that point if the *More Important* location factors have not been satisfied.

### A. Local

Shrewsbury has a single tax rate, which is a benefit to businesses: the single rate typically results in a lower rate for commercial and industrial properties than a split tax rate. In addition to the property tax, the town also collects a hotel room tax and a meals tax. About 3.3 percent of the town’s tax revenues comes from industrial properties, about 8.4 percent comes from commercial properties, and the remaining 88.3 percent comes from residential properties.










Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: What types of taxes are collected by your jurisdiction to pay for local services?			
- Property tax	yes		yes
- Local sales tax	no		no
- Local income tax	no		no
- Hotel room tax	yes		no
- Meals tax	yes		no
2: Of the potential commercial and industrial property tax revenue your jurisdiction could collect, what percent is currently abated?	0%		0%
3: Does your jurisdiction tax property in industrial or commercial uses at a different rate than residential properties?	no		yes
4: If yes, what is the tax rate on industrial/commercial property? \$ /\$1,000			15.47
5: If yes, what is the tax rate on residential property? \$ /\$1,000			8.21



<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
6: If no, what is the tax rate on all property?	11.67		11.67
7: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Industrial %	3.3		
8: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Commercial %	8.4		
9: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Residential %	87		
10: Does your jurisdiction impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development?	no		no

## B. Tax Delinquency

Shrewsbury is more proactive in addressing tax delinquent properties than the CGM. Even with the town's lower tax delinquency rate, Shrewsbury auctions tax title properties after one year. It is recommended that if a tax title property is an impediment to a project, the staff at Shrewsbury give it special attention to expedite a solution.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
11: What proportion of residential property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
12: What proportion of commercial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
13: What proportion of industrial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
14: How many properties are tax defaulted or subject to the power of sale?	0-50		between 0-50 and 50-100
15: When do you choose to auction tax title properties?	After 1 year		1-5 years
16: Do you have an organized and defined process for conducting such auctions and ensuring that they are successful?	yes		yes
17: Do you auction the "right to foreclose" on tax delinquent properties?	no		no
18: Do you seek tax abatement on tax title properties to allow the liens to clear for new owners?	no		no
19: If a tax delinquent or tax title property serves as an impediment to development, does the property receive special attention?	no		no

## Section 10. Access to Information









While a town's website may rank as *Less Important* in terms of decision making, it can be the initial source of information that entices a location expert to probe deeper and contact a municipality's economic development department for further information. At that point, an appropriate town staff member has an opportunity to step in and develop a personal relationship with the developer or company representative. If the necessary data is not easily accessible and understandable, the researcher may reject the town as a candidate, opting instead to consider towns with easily accessible data.

### A. Website ○





Shrewsbury's website offers several additional pieces of information than the CGM that helps businesses and location experts doing research on the town. Specifically, Shrewsbury lists all local development policies and procedures, allows applicants to file electronically, and provides lists of available land and building sites.

Shrewsbury has downloadable forms and applications but they are not date certified (to ensure they are current). Your town could improve the site by making available an economic development tool aimed specifically at businesses and developers, permitting checklists and flow charts, links to state and regional permitting and planning agencies, information on planned developments, a list of permitted projects, a list of projects under review, and links to regional economic development agencies, colleges, community development corporations, and sports and cultural resources.

Shrewsbury should continue to add economic development-related information to its website and make it easy for researchers to submit documents online. The town should also consider a single person to update the website and to regularly review site content for the most up-to-date and accurate information about doing business in Shrewsbury. The more information made available online, the easier it is for interested businesses, developers, and location specialists to research Shrewsbury and submit required documents to expedite development and investment.

Question	Shrewsbury		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	yes		no
2: Does your website have contact information for key officials?	yes		yes
3: Does your website have general information about your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
4: How frequently is your website updated?	Weekly		Weekly
5: Does your website include an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers?	no		no
6: Is there a development permit checklist or flow chart on the website?	no		no
7: Are permit applications available for downloading on the website?	yes		yes
8: Are applications and other forms date certified to ensure that they are the most recent versions (i.e. the same versions that you would get in person)?	no		no

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
9: Is it possible to file a permit application electronically?	yes		no
10: Is there a list of available land and building sites on the website?	yes		no
11: If yes, check the types of information available about each site. (Check all that apply)			
- :Owner	no		no
- Square footage of vacant land	yes		no
- Square footage and quality of existing buildings and structures	yes		no
- Abutters	yes		no
- Zoning	yes		no
- Assessed value	yes		no
- Tax rate	yes		no
- Current tax status (e.g. paid up, delinquent)	no		no
- Contamination	no		no
- Aerial photos	yes		no
- GIS links	yes		no
12: Other, please specify			
13: Is there a posting of current hearings available on the website?	yes		yes
14: Is there a posting of pending applications available on the website?	no		no
15: Is there a listing of current members of development review boards and staff contact information?	yes		yes
16: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)			

<i>Question</i>	<i>Shrewsbury</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
- State finance agencies	no		no
- State permitting agencies	no		no
- Regional planning agencies	no		no
- Regional development organizations	no		no
- Workforce training organizations	no		no
- Local public or quasi-public financing resources	no		no
- Demographic information	no		no
- Economic development agencies	no		no
17: Other, please specify			
18: Are there links to other locally-based private or non-profit organizations?			
- Colleges and universities	no		no
- Chambers of Commerce	yes		yes
- Community development corporations	no		no
- Arts and cultural organizations	no		yes
- Sports and recreation venues	no		no
- Convention and tourist organization	no		no
19: Other, please specify			
20: Is there a designated webmaster or staff person responsible for maintaining the website?	no		yes

## NEXT STEPS

Shrewsbury is an attractive and desirable community with a very highly educated and professional workforce; excellent public schools; a very low crime rate; proximity to a regional vocational school, two community colleges, and several four-year colleges; and recreational waterfront and open spaces. The town is strategically located near five major highways and state routes. The town benefits from active and effective town leadership, an internal economic development planner, two active regional chambers of commerce, and proximity to technology centers in Worcester and Boston.

While the town has advantages that will support economic development, there are also some disadvantages. **The most serious potential “deal-breakers” are the currently-reported very long permitting processes and the capacity regulations on water, public sewer, and wastewater treatment.** Other disadvantages include that town officials do not have an economic development plan and have not identified industries to target for recruitment. Without explicitly identified targets, the town runs the risk of economic development by chance rather than purposefully targeting certain industries, directing marketing efforts to priority industries, and taking advantage of regional and state development priorities and incentive programs. Shrewsbury also does not engage local businesses or regional/state economic development or planning entities in marketing efforts.

Shrewsbury has engaged town leadership and citizenry. This enviable level of engagement has been successful for Shrewsbury to date because local businesses have developed an effective working relationship and a high level of trust with the team. However, it is suggested that **Shrewsbury town officials and staff more actively engage local businesses and residents to shape a vision and plan for its economic development future and participate in marketing that future.** This buy-in effort will shape the brand and image of Shrewsbury so that existing residents and businesses promote economic development efforts. In addition, prospective residents and businesses will get the real picture of what it’s like to live and do business in Shrewsbury. When businesses see the entire town (municipal leaders, businesses, and residents) working towards economic development objectives, they too will understand that Shrewsbury is a business friendly community and a desirable place to live.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following next steps for Shrewsbury, all of which are high priority to strengthen current economic development efforts. These recommendations include assessing the need for streamlining the permitting process, creating a comprehensive economic development vision and plan in conjunction with local residents and businesses, and developing a comprehensive marketing plan that enlists existing businesses to shape the brand and image of Shrewsbury. In addition, we recommend that Shrewsbury explore best practices, innovative solutions, and lobbying needs to address infrastructure constraints due to regulations on water, sewer, and waste water treatment capacity.

The infrastructure capacity issue will require several years to implement, so we recommend starting now on finding solutions and discussing options with the EPA and MassDEP to increase use of current infrastructure. In addition, Shrewsbury should leverage its participation with regional groups to lobby for regulatory changes. In the interim, Shrewsbury can target industry sectors like data centers and warehouses that would require fewer water, sewer, and treatment resources in the short term. Once capacity has been secured for new businesses, the town can increase recruitment activities to attract other industries in its economic development plan.

We recommend creating separate teams to address each of these four priorities, but all of these priorities can be addressed simultaneously. In fact, we strongly encourage information sharing across team and departments to ensure

that the implementation of these priorities fit with long term economic development goals and attract targeted industries. Shrewsbury currently has one economic development staff member who receives strong support from other staff members and regional associations. It is recommended that the town formalize commitment from other staffers and members of the community by creating an economic development committee. This committee would support the work of the economic development staffer, measure progress on the economic development priorities, and provide ongoing business and resident representation in the economic development process.

These recommendations will put the town of Shrewsbury well on its way to achieving its strategic goals for growth and development for decades to come.

Recommendation	Priority
Collect empirical evidence and business community feedback about timeliness of permit approvals to determine if the town needs to streamline its permitting processes	High
Work with local businesses and residents to create a comprehensive economic development vision and plan, including identifying business sectors to target.	High
Create a comprehensive marketing plan that enlists existing businesses to shape the brand and image of Shrewsbury	High
Explore best practices, innovative solutions, and a lobbying agenda to address the infrastructure capacity constraints	High